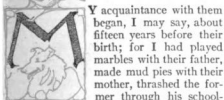




The Twins

By Morgan Robertson

Illustrated by Gordon M. McCouch



My acquaintance with them began, I may say, about fifteen years before their birth; for I had played marbles with their father, made mud pies with their mother, thrashed the former through his school-days, and loved the latter from the beginning to the end—which is not yet. Finally, I had officiated as best man at the wedding.

The twins were as like as two peas, and to preserve their identity the usual expedient was tried of decorating them with ribbons of different hue. But when, at three years of age, they were detected in the very natural act of swapping ribbons, I, as the family physician, was called in; then Jack's identity was fixed with a tattooed dot of india ink on his left arm, and Jim's with a corresponding dot on his right. Their mother was mostly concerned with their pain and protesting squalls, their father with my wonderful ingenuity, and I with the rebellious, yet imperious, thought that, according to the eternal fitness of things, I should have been the father of these two beautiful boys.

Their father was about my age, twenty-five, and a weakling; one who, as a boy, could never catch a ball nor throw one straight; who never learned to swim, and preferred girls for playmates; who, as a youth, could not dress himself without assistance; who never, in his whole lackadaisical life, had an original thought or took the initiative in any proceeding; and why that splendid, healthy-minded, dark-eyed girl of seventeen should choose him out of a host of suitors was beyond my comprehension at the time. Later, I understood;

somewhat weakly sexed at that age, but largely endowed with the maternal instinct (she played with dolls until within a year of her marriage), she pitied his helplessness and married him to mother and protect him. And from this pair, so utterly diverse, Mother Nature produced two perfect specimens of humanity, and rested. After their arrival the parents drifted apart, and from sheer incompatibility were divorced when the boys were seven years old. They went to their original homes at opposite sides of the town, each taking a twin; for the asinine judge, unable to decide in favor of either, had, Solomon-like, so conditioned the divorce.

Their grief was heart-rending—equaled only by that of the mother, as I, in my professional relation to each home, had full opportunity to judge. But time softened this grief in all of them, and brought about in the mother a state of mind exceedingly valuable and gratifying to me. In a year from the divorce she became my wife. So far I had observed the development of the twins as a physician, noting that the measles, mumps, croup, and other childhood ailments came to both at the same time, and, as a physician, ascribing it to bodily contagion. But now, still a physician to each, I took note of other concurrent happenings that spoke of mental contagion as well. I was called to Jim late one afternoon by the agitated father, and found him in a strange mental condition, crying and laughing, and again storming in an ecstasy of rage at the house-dog, a gentle, harmless collie and a former pet, against whom he had conceived a violent hatred. He had attacked and nearly killed him with a club.

When I reached home that evening I was

regaled by the joyous Jack with an account of his successful battle that afternoon with a mad dog that had attacked him. It was a large, black mongrel, and he had brained it with his ball-club. I sounded his emotions. Frightened? Of course; who would not be with a huge mad brute, frothing at the mouth, charging at him? But he had staggered the animal with the first blow, and then had come his courage, his anger, and his furious desire to kill, and save his life. Yes, he had cried, afterward, and was much ashamed of the weakness. But I reassured him on this point, convinced him that strong, brave men sometimes cried under extreme excitement, and in my desire to make the most of the incident in his development, almost overshot the mark. His self-respect became abnormal, and neighboring dogs and small boys suffered, until he was stopped by an experience more salutary than would have been the strapping which his mother and I were seriously contemplating. He attacked another dog, but a sane dog of small size and attending to his business. This dog met the assault bravely and, though suffering keenly from Jack's first blow and unable to injure any living thing larger than a rabbit, offered a strong protest of growls and barks, the moral effect of which was to send the small boy fleeing for home with the small dog snapping at his heels. The neighbors rejoiced, and it was a month before Jack recovered from the humiliation. He did not understand, nor did I until the following day, when his father informed me on the street that the collie, recovered in mind and body, had revenged himself by attacking and biting Jim, who was badly frightened and needed my attention. I could not learn that there was concomitance of time, but I knew that the twins, a mile apart, *shared each other's emotions.*

After a fruitless attempt to get legal transfer of Jim to my own household, I fell back on my growing faith in this sympathy of mind, trusting that a careful training of Jack might have a corresponding influence upon Jim. But in this I hoped too much. No such sympathy is ever as strong as daily and personal contact, and the direct and weakening example of that father's life and words worked powerfully upon the character of the boy. His individuality lessened, and as though this lessening were an invitation, the apparently fortuitous incidents and

influences of his life became such as to lessen it still further. He seemed to be looking for trouble, and would attempt feats that he failed to perform, while Jack attempted such as were just within his increasing powers. A boy that Jack had pummeled came around and took revenge on Jim. He would yield to pressure that Jack would resist.

And so they grew farther and farther apart in face, form, and disposition, Jack into a tall, straight, handsome, and high-minded young gentleman, Jim into a shifty, cowardly, stoop-shouldered, and cad-like sort of a youth, without friends, ambition, or ideals, whose backwardness in study brought him into the lowest class of the town's one high school as Jack entered the highest. In this year of schooling they met for the first time since the separation, but they met as strangers. They knew they were brothers, of course, but carefully avoided reference to the fact, and soon avoided each other. Between them there was no outward sympathy nor community of interest, the unwise but cast-iron pride of the mother finding expression in Jack's attitude, and the cowardice of the negative father in Jim's.

Jack graduated with honor, and, confronted with another four years of study at college, yet ardent, ambitious, anxious to begin life's battle as a man, chose a career that satisfied both conditions—a life in the navy. He arranged matters himself, secured an appointment to the Naval Academy, and left us. And on that day, Jim, friendless in school and stubborn, was dismissed from school for negligence in his studies. Then, as though his evil star were now at its zenith, his father, having lost all his inherited property in unwise speculation, took him away, where I could not learn; but a year later we read the list of lost in a coasting-steamship wreck, and in this list were the names of these two.

I now had to deal with a half-crazed woman, who spoke little and did not weep, but whose strained face and whitening hair told of the strength of that misplaced pride and outraged mother-love, suppressed for so many years. Nothing that I could say or do availed against the aroused craving for the neglected boy. She resisted my oft-repeated suggestions that Jim was gone, and that there was nothing to do but make the best of it. She refused to be resigned, for

she could not bring herself to believe that he was dead. She insisted that he was alive, and that some day he would come back.

This continued through the years, while her hair became whiter and her voice nearly silent, while Jack finished his course and sea term, to be then retired against his will because of the preponderance of officers in a wooden navy too small for them, and while my practice and my health left me under the strain of caring for the queenly woman I loved. Then Jack, a born free-lance who would have entered any navy in the world had a war been on, did the next best thing for him; he secured command of a large, new merchant ship, and made a successful voyage, perhaps the youngest and probably the best educated master in the merchant marine. When he returned my nerves were as bad as his mother's, my practice was gone, my future uncertain; and so we accepted his invitation to make a voyage with him, I with the listlessness of all neurasthenics, my wife with an avidity which surprised us. She brightened at once.

And now this story really begins.

II

SHE was a two-thousand-ton, double top-gallant and skysail yard ship—one of the larger, slower type that succeeded the old Cape Horn clippers, but a ship that even a naval officer might feel proud to command; and Jack was certainly proud of her. And as we—his mother and myself—watched him pacing the poop-deck as sail was being made, giving an occasional quiet order to the helmsman or sending a brazen roar forward to the mate on the forecabin, we were frankly proud of him. Six feet tall to an inch, straight as a man may be, with a chest almost as deep as his shoulders were broad, sunburned and brown-eyed, with only a well-kept mustache to relieve the boyishness of his face, he presented a picture that brought light into the eyes and a smile to the face of that mother as she stood beside me. But a contrasting look of pain followed, and I knew the thought behind was of the other boy, of whom we never spoke.

The first mate was a huge, hairy, brutal sort of a man, uneducated beyond the mechanical formulas of navigation, but with a large and healthy conception of his own value to the ship and her people. The second mate was like him to a lesser extent

—not quite so big, nor brutal, nor profane, and with less of the art of navigation.

At eight bells of that first evening out the men were chosen into watches by the two mates much as boys choose sides in a ball game, and my wife and I drew amidships to witness the scene. They were an unkempt lot in the moonlight, mostly foreigners, and clad in greasy and tarry garments of nondescript pattern and shape. Each called out his name as he was chosen, moving to starboard or port, according to the watch he now belonged to, and when the job was half done Jack, smoking a cigar, joined us and critically scanned his crew.

"Relieve the wheel and lookout," said the mate, when the last man was chosen. "That'll do the watch."

"Wait!" said Jack sharply, tossing away his cigar and stepping toward the dispersing men. "I've something to say to you."

They halted and drew together.

"This is my second voyage in the merchant marine," he continued. "The last was my first. Before that I was in the navy, with the power of the law and the Charlestown prison behind me in every order I gave to a man. As a consequence of this condition no man-o'-war's man ever refuses to obey an order, and few of them ever get to that prison. But I brought such ideas with me when I took command of this ship. I spoke kindly to my men and treated them well. I forbade my mates to bully or strike them, and even ironed my second mate for ignoring my wishes. I took sick and injured men aft and nursed them. But I found that I had made a mistake. Merchant sailors can be jailed as easily as man-o'-war's men, but they don't know it. Knowing nothing, they fear nothing until it comes to them. Orders were disobeyed on that voyage, and each man was his own boss; ropes were never coiled up without an argument, gear was rove off wrong, ear-rings were passed farm-fashion, canvas was lost, marlinespikes, capstan-bars, and draw-buckets went overboard, tar-pots were dropped from aloft on a clean deck, and a paint-brush came down on my head. Discipline went to the dogs, and I nearly lost my ship. Now there'll be none of that here. As I won't have time nor inclination to appeal to the law if you make trouble I mean to forestall it. I've shipped mates that'll break your heads on the first provocation, and they have my instructions to do it. So

watch out. You'll get plenty of grub while you deserve it, but when you don't it'll be all hands in the afternoon and the government allowance. That'll do."

"That's all right, Cappen," said a big Irishman in a voice of rage. "This is a Yankee ship, an' ye needn't ha' said all that. But I tell ye, if ye'll pick out able seamen yerself in the shippin'-office, 'stid o' lettin' a shippin'-master gi' ye barbers an' waiters that don't know port from sta'board ye'll ha' no throuble wi' yer min. Luk at this ye've gi'n us for a watch-mate." He seized a man standing near, swung him at arm's length, and flung him, spinning on his feet, full against the first mate. That worthy, shocked out of his better judgment, instead of rebuking the Irishman, drew back his mighty fist and struck the staggering man in the face, sending him reeling back toward the place he had come from. He slipped, stumbled, and fell, his head striking the corner of the main-hatch. Then he lay quiet on the deck.

But a strange thing happened—strange and inconsistent with regard to Jack's just-uttered declaration of his position. No sooner had the mate struck the man than Jack, with a muttered curse, launched himself toward his first officer, and knocked him against the fife-rail, where he clung, choking and clucking. Jack had struck him twice, once in the face, once in the body. And now a stranger thing happened. It all occurred so quickly that I could hardly take note, shaky of nerve as I was and hampered by the distressed woman on my arm; but Jack, having struck the mate, and before the still erect victim of the mate and the Irishman had stumbled, had immediately bounded toward the Irishman. But as the luckless fellow's head struck the hatch combing, Jack brought up, and with a low, inarticulate whimper and a face like that of a frightened child looked this way and that, then sped aft toward the poop-steps. We followed, while the second mate dispersed the men, and found Jack in a strange condition of terror, unnatural to him, or to any man of his type. His agitated mother endeavored to soothe him, but between her motherly admonitions to Jack came wifeiy admonitions to me to attend to the poor man who had been so brutally maltreated.

So I went forward, passing on the way the two mates, the one assisting the other. As I passed, the second mate called out that the

other's jaw-bone and some ribs were broken, and that my services were needed; but, feeling enough of indignation to make the brutal first mate the last on my list of patients, I went on, and found the mistreated sailor in the port fore-castle, where he had been carried by his shipmates. He was sitting on a chest, just recovering his senses, and looking about in a dazed manner out of swollen and blackened eyes. As the men parted to make way for me Jack's mighty voice sounded from amidships: "Weather main-brace, here. Where's the watch? Where's the second mate? Attend to your yards, sir." Obviously, Jack was himself again.

"I didn't mean to hit the mate wi' him, sorr," said the big Irishman deferentially, "an' it was a dom shame for the mate to slug him like that, even if he was no sailor. But the skipper's a brick. Begob, he'll 'tind to that bunco mate."

"Are you hurt much?" I asked of the victim. He looked into my face, then, rising, burst forth:

"Doctor, doctor, take me away from here. Take me out of this place. They hit me and curse me because I don't know things. I don't know why I am here—I don't know where I am." The broken voice became a wail. "I'm on the water again, and I'll drown, I know I'll drown. Oh, doctor"—he seized my arm—"I'm Jim; don't you know me, doctor?"

"Jim?" I queried. "Jim who?" and turned him to the light.

"Look, doctor. You did this, they told me, when I was a baby." He pulled up the right sleeve of a ragged, filthy shirt, and showed me a dot of india ink just below the elbow.

"For God's sake, are you Jim, the twin brother of Jack? We all thought you were dead—drowned with your father."

"He was drowned, doctor. I floated on a piece of board and was saved. I went crazy for a while, and then—I never could get along. I couldn't get work, and things got worse and worse, and then I took to the road, and then I came to New York, and—I guess I got drunk, and got here."

"Shanghaied, that's what ye were," grunted the Celt.

I looked closely at Jim's face. Aside from the facial angle and the color of the eyes there was no resemblance to the brother who, at seven years of age, had been

his counterpart. A badly kept beard added to the discrepancy, no doubt, but the whole atmosphere of the man was different. There was a slight reminder of Jack in the lower tones of the voice, but its usual note was a whine, and in his whole bearing was the slinking aspect of a vagrant of the worst kind. Certainly, I could not take this human wreck into the presence of that mother and brother.

"You must stay here for a while, Jim," I said firmly. "You must not come near the other end of the ship unless I give you permission, and I will see that you are protected and cared for. Understand? Stay here with these men, and I will see you every day. What is your name?" I asked the Irishman.

"Limerick, sorr—aboard ship."

"Limerick, you seem to be a man, and a square one. This is an old friend of mine—and of my family—but you can understand that he must stay here. See that he is well treated, and I will make it right with you."

"I will that, sorr," answered Limerick promptly, "though I belong in the other watch an' ought to be on deck now. I don't wonder ye're ashamed o' him, sorr. I'm ashamed meself. Just the same I'll break the sconce o' the first mon that lays hands on him. I'll do that for ye, sorr. I know a gintleman, an' ye're one, or ye wouldn't be here in this fo'c'sle."

I went aft and joined Jack and his mother on the poop, forgetting the mate's need of my services in the mood I was in.

"Dad," said Jack, addressing me by the name he had called me since I had become his step-father, "you're a physician. Tell me what ails me. I'm all right now, but I went for the mate for doing just what I had told him to do, and then went into a blue funk over it—frightened out of my senses. But what at? I'm not afraid of any man aboard."

"How is the poor man that was struck?" asked my wife anxiously.

"He's all right," I answered promptly, understanding now her instinctive concern, and inclined to smile at Jack's palpable resentment of it.

"But what's the matter with *me*?" he demanded sharply.

"I don't know, Jack," I said. "I'll have to think it out."

His mention of the mate had recalled to me the plight he was in, and I went to him,

finding that the second mate's diagnosis was correct. Two ribs and his jaw-bone were smashed as though from the kick of a mule. I bound him in plasters, and stoically endured his mumbled profanity; then, first seeing my wife to her berth in the after cabin, and thoroughly exhausted by the exciting experiences, I took a sleeping-draft to quiet my nerves and went to my own berth in the forward cabin.

But, perhaps because of the intensity of the strain upon my nervous system, perhaps because of my strong interest in the problem, the sleeping-draft merely threw me into a logical, inductive frame of mind that kept me awake all night, thinking it out. And it was daylight before the problem took shape. After years of separation the twins again shared each other's emotions.

III

WITH the problem still unsolved, however, I went to sleep, and wakened at eight bells of the afternoon watch. Going on deck, I found a gale of wind blowing out of the southeast, the ship hove down under the three lower topsails, spanker, spencer, and foretopmast staysail, and liquid hills of greenish-gray bombarding the weather-bow and occasionally climbing aboard. Jack, clad in yellow oilskins and sou'wester, stood on the poop in a fleeting patch of sunlight, trying to get an afternoon sight with his sextant as the sun peeped from behind the racing storm-clouds. Jim was also on the poop, but on the lee side, scurrying forward along the alley in advance of the irate second mate, who was profanely criticizing Jim's bad taste in coming to relieve the wheel without knowledge of steering or of the compass. Jack, busy with the sextant, did not witness the scene, nor hear the profanity; but I, having a personal and domestic interest in the matter, met the officer, returning after a final kick at Jim, and softly but intensely informed him that such language must cease within hearing of my wife, or I would deal with him as man to man. He apologized, in his way, and I then gave him the reasons I had given Limerick for keeping Jim out of sight, and secured his cooperation. Limerick was at the wheel, scowling in sympathy with me, and he whispered as I passed that it would not have happened had he been forward—that the men of the other watch had driven

Jim aft to relieve the wheel before they had learned his status.

I joined Jack. He seemed himself, showing no sign of the night's agitation; yet he looked a little worried.

"Couldn't get a sight, dad," he said, swinging his sextant at arm's length, and smiling, rather sadly, I thought. "But the Long Island coast is about ten miles under the lee. How'd you like to drown at the end of a cable to-night?"

"Why," I asked, "is there any danger?"

"We're on the wrong tack, I think; but I expected it to veer to the east. It hangs right on from sou'-sou'-east—dead on to the beach, and as it is it don't make much difference which tack we're on if we hit. If it shows the slightest sign of hauling to the west I'll wear ship and try to clear Montauk. If it don't, it's the anchors."

"Why not wear ship now?—whatever that is," I answered.

"Couldn't clear it anyway with the wind this way, and I'd only lose a full mile to leeward. Our drift under this canvas is quartering, and about three miles an hour."

"Is there no other recourse than wearing ship?"

"Clubhauling, if the wind shifts too late to wear. You see, wearing is putting a ship on the other tack by squaring away before the wind and then rounding to. Clubhauling is going about head to wind with the help of the lee anchor. It's about the most difficult operation in seamanship. We did it once in the *Monocacy*, but few merchant skippers learn the trick."

All this was unintelligible to me at the time, and I went down to my wife. I found her as comfortable as a woman may be in her first storm at sea, and then paid a professional visit to the first officer. Then I went forward on the reeling main-deck to see and encourage the unfortunate Jim. On the way I thought seriously of taking Jack into my confidence, but gave it up when I considered that the shock and mental agitation might not be well for him with his ship in danger. Then I thought of the alternative—could I not arouse a little courage in Jim, so that if a critical moment arrived Jack would not be obsessed with his cowardice, as he was the preceding evening. It was worth trying—at least worth thinking of. In any event Jim would be none the worse for a little bracing up.

I found him shivering in his wet garments,

crouching from the blast of cold rain and spindrift under the weather-rail near the fore rigging.

"Doctor," he sobbed, "take me away from these fellers. They hit me and kick me, and I'm afraid. I haven't a friend here but you."

"Jim," I asked kindly, "do you really believe me to be your friend? Have you full confidence that I can help you?"

"Yes, yes, doctor. You were always good to me, in the old days. And you married mother. Where is she, and Jack? Jack never cared for me, but I'd like to see mother 'fore I die."

"You shall see her sometime, Jim, but not yet—not for a long time, perhaps. You are worn out and want sleep. You want dry clothes and a good, long sleep, and you'll feel all right when you wake up. Stay here and when I beckon to you, come."

I had made up my mind. Going aft, I found my wife in the forward companion-way, where she had been watching me. Her first question was of the poor fellow forward, and I said what I could to quiet the instinctive mother-love that she herself could not analyze. I told her that the man needed only a little care, which I was giving him. Then, when I had led her aft to her quarters, I sought the cabin steward, adjured him to silence, and arranged for exclusive possession of the forward cabin stateroom that adjoined my own. Going on deck, I imposed the same condition upon the second mate (who was beginning to respect me), and beckoned to the expectant Jim. He came on the run, and I soon had him in that room, with his wet rags exchanged for a dry suit of my own, and no one the wiser but the second mate and the steward, both of whom considered him a sick man taken aft for treatment. Which was more or less the truth.

Giving Jim a stimulant, I put him into the berth and covered him, for he still shivered from the chill of the storm. Then, holding his hand, I began a gentle, soothing flow of words in which I assured him that I was his friend, that I would so continue, that he was in no danger while I was with him, but that he must go to sleep, and rest, and that when he wakened he would feel braver and stronger, like his brother Jack, whom he surely must remember. In a few moments his eyelids had ceased to flutter, and soon after they closed under the steady,

monotonous lullaby of my voice; but he was not yet asleep, and I continued, enjoining upon the weary, homeless, and desolate waif again and again—speaking more emphatically as his breathing grew heavier—that he must be like Jack, as he was when they were little boys together and shared the same impulses; that he must hark back to that time, and rouse up the strong, brave soul, common to each, which had developed in Jack, but which in him had been suppressed by years of continued defeat. Strongly insisting upon this toward the last, I finally left him, having actually talked him to sleep.

On deck I found Jack really worried. "If it would only shift," he said, "one way or the other. But here it is, hanging on out of the same quarter, and blowing harder. The storm-center is inland, and coming right at us. See the land yonder?"

A dim line of yellowish brown showed faintly through the dense blanket of gray to leeward—the only visible border between sea and sky. Two hours more would bring us perilously close.

Supper was served, and I ate, hurriedly and ravenously, my first meal in twenty-four hours; then I prepared my wife for what might come, saw that she was dressed warmly, and brought her on deck, where Jack, supperless and anxious, paced the deck abaft the house and watched the wind and compass. Forward, all hands, under the second mate, worked at the two chain cables in the lessening light of the evening, hauling them up from the lockers and ranging them ready for use. Occasionally, in the intervals of work, the men would look keenly aft and to leeward at the approaching line of coast. Every face wore a look of anxiety; all knew of the danger.

When the cables were ranged a quiet order from Jack brought a cast of the lead. Twelve fathoms was the finding.

"Lord grant we hit close to a life-saving station," said Jack, looking fondly at his mother. "No boats could live a minute in this sea. We're not far from the storm-center. It's got to shift six points at least to clear us, now. I'll get ready to clubhaul, anyway."

An order to the tired but very efficient second mate resulted in two strong hawsers being brought up from the forepeak, coiled one each side on the poop abaft the house, and the ends led forward outside of all

rigging to the hawse-pipes in the bow, into which they were passed. Then another sounding was taken, showing ten fathoms of water.

"About half an hour more," said Jack to the second mate. "Fake your braces down for going about, and have the carpenter stand by at the windlass with a top-mall and a punch to slip the chain at any shackle." The officer stared in amazement, but went forward to execute the orders. Evidently, he knew as little of their portent as did I.

He reported in time, "All ready for stays, sir," and we waited. There was nothing more to do, it seemed, with the ship blowing almost straight on to a lee shore. Again was the lead cast, and nine fathoms was the result called out.

"All hands on deck, and stand by on the poop," roared Jack through his hands. The men trooped aft and crowded the weather alley.

A tall, unkempt figure with face tied up in cloths lumbered up the poop-steps and approached Jack. "I b'long on deck, Cappen," he mumbled. "Can I be any good?"

"No, sir," answered Jack kindly, but sharply; "you cannot; but stay on deck and be ready for swimming."

The injured mate bowed his head and, first looking at the compass, then painfully aloft at the wind-vane, seated himself on the wheel-box. His chance of swimming was poor; he could hardly stand.

The steward came up, muffled to the chin in a long overcoat, and the sight of him brought to my mind poor Jim, lying asleep in a cabin berth. Down the after companionway I rushed, but was hardly clear of the stairs before I felt the ship heel still farther under a furious blast of wind, then straighten nearly upright; and over and above the sound of rattling canvas came Jack's thundering roar: "Keep full. Hard up your wheel. Stand by for stays. Down off——" Something had interrupted the order. I heard my wife scream, but I hurried into the forward cabin after Jim, just in time to see him leave the stateroom and dart out through the forward door.

I followed him out, but he was not in sight on the main-deck, nor was he among the men floundering down the poop-steps to stations. So I mounted to the poop; and there, prone upon his back in the alley, was

the unconscious form of Jack, with blood upon his face, and his mother bending over him.

"The wind shifted, and the mizzen royal-yard shook out of her," said the second mate from near the wheel, "and something came down and hit him on the head."

Lifting my wife to her feet, I examined him hurriedly, but found no cause for alarm. He was simply stunned by some falling object. "Let him lie where he is, and he'll come to directly," I said, and, leaving him to his mother, I joined the second mate, to ask of Jim.

But a voice from the top of the house interrupted my query—a voice like the blast of a speaking-trumpet, strangely like Jack's. And there was Jim beside the mizzenmast, bareheaded and erect, his stoop-shoulders squared, his eyes staring straight before him into the horizontal rain and drift from the combers. "Ready about," he had said in that borrowed voice. "Hard alee!"

My wife screamed again, stood up, and stared at the figure on the house, and in a bound I had reached her.

"It's your boy Jim," I said in her ear, "but keep quiet. He's asleep." She knew what I meant, and stood still, staring with wide-open, hungry eyes at Jim, with an occasional downward glance at Jack.

"Get down off that house," sang out the second mate angrily.

"Let him alone," I shouted, "and do what he orders. Do you hear? Obey his orders to the letter. They will be correct."

I hardly knew this myself, but the second mate believed me. He motioned to the helmsman, who ground the wheel hard down. Forward, the forecastle men had let go the foretopmast staysail sheet, and this sail flapped furiously as the ship came slowly up to the wind. I hastened to the compass and looked. Though I could not have named the points, I could see that the wind was now blowing from the southwest, and that the ship *had* been heading nearly straight for that line of sand. I went back to my wife, and Jim turned his expressionless face and sleepy eyes toward the second mate, who had nervously followed me.

"Go forward," Jim commanded; "cock-bill and stand by the lee anchor to let go at the word; then stand by with the carpenter to make fast the spring-line to the chain forward of the windlass, and to slip the chain at the first shackle abaft. And send

two men aft to attend this line at the quarter-bitt."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the astounded officer, hastening to obey.

Limerick was one of the men sent aft to the spring-line, and his amazement exceeded that of the other. "Goin' to clubhaul her," he said to me, "an' he don't know the compass, an' he's only a barber man an' no sailor. It beats my goin' to sea."

With my arm about my wife I watched the somnambulist, ready to speak to him if I thought the occasion warranted it, ready to prevent others from speaking; for the sleepy mind of Jim—or the soul of the unconscious Jack, if you like—might obey an unwise or misleading word, even now.

Slowly and more slowly the great ship came up against the pounding of the southerly seas, wavered, and stopped with the weather leech of the maintopsail just lifting.

"Let go the lee anchor," thundered Jim. The anchor was dropped, and the chain rattled out of the hawse-pipe.

"Maintopsail haul," came the next order from Jim in the same vibrant voice. The lee main- and weather cro' jack-braces were cast off, and the after yards came around with a swing and a crash that threatened to take them out of her; but they held, and the opposite braces were tautened.

"Is Jim a sailor, too?" my wife whispered.

"No," I answered gently. "He is doing Jack's work for him. Thank God for your boy to-night. He is saving our lives."

Slowly the ship's head sagged away from the wind; then it stopped and a tremor went through her. The anchor had bit, but was dragging.

"Pay out on that chain," roared Jim to the forecastle, then to Limerick he said quietly, "Catch a turn with that spring and stand by to slack away."

"Very good, sorr," answered Limerick, as he took a turn with the line around the bitt. "Oh, he's a navy officer all right, sorr," he said joyously, but softly, to me. "I've been there an' I know 'em."

Again the ship's nose drew up into the wind under the strain of the still dragging anchor, and when head to it, with the foretopmast aback and tending to throw her still farther, Jim called out: "Hang on to your chain. Make fast the spring to the chain, and knock out the shackle-pin." Then he waited a moment or two, until the heaving

ship unmistakably pointed to the southward of the wind's eye, and shouted: "All hands on the forebraces. Fore bowline. Let go and haul. Slip the chain." Then quietly to Limerick: "Handsomely on that spring when the strain comes. Don't part it."

"Aye, aye, sir," laughed Limerick. "I've been in the service, sorr."

"Not a word to him," I said, bounding toward Limerick. "Not a word. He knows what he is doing."

The end of the chain had rattled out of the hawse-pipe, and under the tension of the line to the quarter the big ship was paying off to the southward, while the men slowly hauled the foreyard around. When it finally filled and was steadied, and the ship brought up as high as she would lay, the last of the spring-line slipped out of Limerick's hands and went overboard. And now the big first mate, who had quietly watched the whole operation from the wheel-box, approached and studied the compass.

"The wind is hauling all the time," he said through his swollen jaws, "and we'll have a fair wind to the open sea. But who is that man? He kept her off the beach. She'd 'a' hit in a few minutes more."

"He's captain of the ship," I answered.

But Jim was not acting like a captain now. He ran to the monkey-rail at the side of the house, and partly climbed over to descend. Then he went back and resumed his position at the mizzenmast. Then he made another attempt, succeeded, and, gaining the alley, sped forward to the steps and went down them. A groan from Jack, followed by his mother's cry of sympathy, apprised me of the reason. Jack was recovering consciousness, and after assuring myself that he was in his right mind, I left him, still dazed and stupid, in the care of his mother, and leisurely followed Jim, finding him just where I expected to—sound asleep in the stateroom berth. I wakened him, and he sat up, blinking at me.

"Lordy, what a dream, doctor. Mother and Jack—oh, I forget," he said sleepily. "And something hit me on the head—here." He felt of the spot on his head where Jack had been struck.

"Come out on deck, Jim," I said, and he followed me.

"How do you feel now, Jim?"

"Fine, doctor, but where's this boat going, I'd like to know?"

"Feel afraid of the water, now?"

"Not a bit. Why, it can't hurt anyone, can it—unless you fall into it?"

"Afraid of those men forward, Jim?"

"No, I'm not." His face took on a look of defiance. "Why, doctor, I could lick most o' that crowd, couldn't I? I feel different, somehow. But that dream, doctor, about mother and Jack. That dream meant something. Where are they, and how are they?"

"Come below, Jim."

This is not a story of sentiment, so that reunion will not be described. This story is a question, with a large interrogation point. The question is: What is the human soul? Is it an entity, or a possible merging of entities? Is it a collection of memory clusters, any of which may assume an individuality, or is it a series of mental planes or concentric spheres? Jack is Jack and Jim is Jim, and there is a separate ego to each. But what part of Jim's soul left him to obsess Jack during the fracas forward when Jack was awake, and why did it not come again before Jack was struck down, and when he was but normally disturbed over the ship's peril. And how much or how little of Jack went into Jim under my suggestion to the latter to be like him, which waited until Jack was unconscious before acting, and which left him when Jack awoke to claim it?

We are sailing south with a crew and a first mate that think Jim a fugitive from justice, protected by the skipper, and with a second mate who thinks me the devil and Jim my familiar. There is a white-haired, happy woman growing young in her aroused mother-love; and there is a former very promising hobo developing surprising qualities of mind and seamanship under mine and Jack's tutelage. But from none of these can I get any light. I am only a village practitioner, and I submit the question to others: What is the human soul?